

WE HAVE WITH US TODAY



Spirit Land

Bill Perkins died—as all men must;
His weary body turned to dust.
But Charon took his sagging soul
And paddled it across the Styx,
Where no one came to grab his roll
And no one talked of politics.

And Bill was glad enough, because
He'd gotten sick of endless laws,
Of growing rents and profiteers,
Of clothes to frame his aching bones,
Of strikes and squabbles through the years,
Of taxes and of telephones.

"Here's where I'll only loaf and dream,"
He thought, "beside a singing stream;
No food to buy—no rent to pay—
No central saying, 'Busy now,'
And every other blissful day
A brand new halo for my brow."

But three days later, dreaming still,
A Medium discovered Bill.
He kicked and scratched—he fought his best
But never had a ghostly chance:
Who would have up against the test
When large blond ladies throw a trance?

This broke his spirit more than all
To have strange, pleading women call
Him "Loving Husband" night and day,
Strange women that he'd never seen,
Where some were blond and some were gray,
And some were fat and some were lean.

Strange fathers spoke to him as "son";
Strange mothers called him "little one";
Strange brothers whispered "Hello, Bill,"
Until one bitter night he tried
While feeling blue and low and ill
To cut his throat in suicide.

"If I do that," he thought, "I'm done;
I'll be two ghosts instead of one;
And she will double up my shift
And keep us both here in her den
Where I will likely have to lift
Just twice as many tables then."

He tried to snap the mystic chain,
But all his protests were in vain;
And so each night at half-past eight
He had to leave his realm of rest
To blow a horn or mark a slate
Or jump a table for her guest.

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